Mixtape: Trees with CBTV

Chapter 1 - Mixtape: Trees

Conifer color study with Lorene

- I'm from the Pacific Northwest, which is also... Washington is known as the evergreen state. We have a lot of conifers around in our forest, in our cities. It's sort of the signature of our place. So today I'm going to do a color study of a tiny sprig of a conifer. So here's this enormous tree. We're going to try and capture its essence down on a little tiny piece of paper. To do that, we're going to use our round brush like yesterday, and we're going to keep it loose. We're going to make our marks more closely resemble what I'm seeing on the sprig. So we're capturing color and movement. This is a Hollywood juniper. One of my favorite things about a Hollywood juniper, it also has these little tiny teal berries on it. We'll see if we can't fit all of that into today's study. We know by now that mixing a credible green, a green that looks to be natural in the garden, is a bit of a chase back and forth, blue, yellow, red. All right, that's getting something. I think I need a little bit of red in there. And this is the sort of mark we're going to make today because we're dealing with the conifer, the needles. And this sprig, which has the berries on it, is a little more of a blue green, whereas this sprig, which is just on another part of the same tree, has a little bit more of a limey color to it. So let's start with our buried branches. Some are thicker than others, the needles. And sometimes I want to fill in a little bit more substantive of a swatch just to express what the color is. That'll kind of translate to these other lines. And again, painting with water, you can kind of catch some of the highlights on the plant. The part where our eyes perceive a lightness, which throws the contrast of the shadows even more into relief. Let's put in some of those turquoisey berries, which is actually my favorite part. See them up here. We might as well make them look like berries, the essence of berry. This is definitely an instance where I want to get the water to move some paint around. I get the impression this is a younger sprig of the tree. It's not nearly, a little more limey green. The berries show up as more of a, also that limey green. So we're working, it's the same plant. It's even part of the same sprig, but we're getting a lot of different greens in our study. We're looking for and finding a range of greens. Tone my green down with some red. It gets very dark kind of as you get on the inside of the branch, the needles that are shadowed on the inside. Now let's capture the bark of the juniper is this wonderful kind of a rusty warm brown. The red, adding in the bark, which is a form of red to this color study adds a lot of energy to it because it is, we're sort of playing with complimentary colors, how they behave. I like to think of it as one complement makes the other even more of itself. So those berries turned out a lot more turquoise as they started to dry out. It's funny how some of the pigments, the way they act, I think I don't want to mess with it too much more. This is when I go in and just start mopping up color on my palate to shift things one little tiny way or another, give it some depth. All right. I feel like I just did a self-portrait of my place, so I'm going to call this home.

Painted fringe tree with Lisa

- Hello. Today we're going to make a stylized tree that looks like something you might see in a children's book. I like to call this style of tree a fringe tree. So I'm going to make this tree red with some fuchsia elements. Again, going outside of your normal nature color palette is really fun. We're going to start by drawing the top of the tree or inking the top of the tree with medium size brush. So this tree is going to have some layers to it and you'll see why it is called, or I call it a french tree

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as we begin to build it. Just keep adding layer after layer to your tree, sort of evoking a pine tree. This one's fun because you can be really loose. Next we're going to add some of our magenta ink, and I'm using this at pretty full opacity. This is where it begins to look like fringe. And that is a French tree. I also made a blue version that's slightly different shape, but same idea. One of the reasons I love drawing trees is there are so many ways to render them from hyper realistic to super stylized and wonky like the ones we've made during this challenge and everything in between. You can decide how stylized versus how realistic you want to render things and nature is a great place to play with that.

Upcycled T is for Tree with Suzy
- It's a tee and it's also going to be a tree. First up, we're going to give our tree some leaves. It's pretty bare right now. We can put in a line here for this leaf up here. And then we're going to add the leaves to the top of the tree. This is going to be the tree trunk. Now our tree has some leaves. We are going to start with the green leaves. I'm using my medium brush because these have some detailed areas. And you can paint your leaves all one color if you want to. I think it's fun to make them different colors. I imagine this is a tree in the spring where everything's in bloom. You could use fall colors and paint a fall tree. For balance, we're going to do one more green leaf. I'm going to add the bright pink for nice springtime look. It's a couple of those. And then I'm going to add one more color. We'll add the blue just for a little fun. I know there aren't blue leaves, but if you think about maybe if you're looking at a spring tree at sunset, the colors start to shift and change. Now to color our tree, I'm going to get my kind of aqua green color and I'm going to stick with my medium brush. It's a pretty detailed area in here that we need to paint. It'd be fun to start with the trunk that's the easy part, but I'm going to start with this area first. If you're feeling nervous about all this painting, it might be helpful to let it dry first. You could paint the entire tree with the light color and paint the leaves on top, but it would change the color of the leaves. They wouldn't look quite the same. Doing it this way allows these colors to stay really bright. All right, now we get to do the trunk. I'm going to switch to my big brush. And we have ourselves a beautiful bright tree.

Foggy watercolor trees with Maria
- I'm really liking working with the flat edge brush. I think we're going to continue along and make some Christmas trees with that same tool. Let's get started by working on the color palette. I'm going to do some evergreen type of trees. So I need to get a color that feels kind of gray green for the evergreen. Okay, let's start there. And I'll just start by putting some really just horizontal lines to mimic the tree shape. And this is where the different flat edge brushes come in handy. As I get to the top of the tree, I might want to use my smaller brush. Some might be triangular, some might not even be triangular. Let me try that there. I'm going to use some pencil as well. I'm going to actually switch things up a little bit and get it a little wetter because I want to experiment with salt as well on this. So we're going to do a bunch of different kinds of tree shapes here. I love the way it feels when I drag the pencil into that. All right, let's try to get some salt in here. I have a little container of salt. I'm just going to drop a little bit in and you'll see how it's really cool, the texture that it makes. And you can see how it just picks up and makes this beautiful texture on there. Don't want to overdo the salt, but I do want to put enough so that I can see the beautiful effect of it. It feels a little bit like it's mimicking snow to me, so I'm going to play with that. I'm going to keep pushing that. Now I'm going to actually try this little bristle here and see, because it's a different kind of bristle and it's wider, I'm going to just try to pick up some of the texture of that. That's kind of cool. Drag it across. So I'm

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getting some different kinds of Christmas trees in there. I might just also drag it very, very lightly across. I'm thinking when I'm doing this about like a pattern with the Christmas trees and I really like this horizontal motion with this. I think I'm going to grab a little bit of blue. I think I'm going to try to get a little bit of blue on here. It's fairly wet, so I will try a little more salt on there in those areas. Okay. Now I'll pull out a little bit more of the trees. What's really nice about the salt is that you can use lots of different types. There's coarser salts that will be a little bolder. Feel free to try different salts and work on this idea of texture. I can put some little snowflakes in there. I'm going to use the dry brush to make it feel windy or foggy so I can drag a little bit on this horizontal ground plane. So I'll put a couple little bits of blue and green, maybe even a little bit of black, but not super black, just to get the eye to move into the tree a little more. But when you're using salt, you can just wait for it to dry really. And then once it's completely dry, you can brush off with a really light brush, a dry brush, just to get the bits of salt that are excess, but you don't want to really touch it too much. You want to just leave it because the watercolor and the ink kind of dry together on the page and the more you touch it, the more it'll kind of mess it up. So you really just want to make sure that you are pretty delicate with it. Mine is all dry now, so I'm just going to use the brush to take off the excess salt. I'm just going to gently brush the excess salt off. Not too much, just very lightly. And you can see the little bits of white in there and how it created this really interesting texture over here.

Graphic inky trees with Jon
- Drawing a tree is all about trying to notice movement and capturing that movement using line weight and quick long lines. We're going to study this tree from a photo because if you can believe it, we couldn't bring an 80 foot oak tree into the studio. This photo is available to you on the class PDF, but I encourage you to try and find a tree either in your neighborhood or at a park nearby so that you can work from life rather than off of a photo. This photo here is an oak tree that we saw when my wife and I were in Pasa Robles. And what we're going to do for this drawing is we're going to isolate it out of the entire scene. So we're going to discount the vineyard, the other trees, this tiny photo of my wife in the foreground, and we're just going to try and focus on the tree and the shadow. Starting with our pigma fine point brush pen, we're going to begin at the base of the trunk and what we are looking for are longer lines that can really help us see the rhythm that the branches flow. Okay? If we're trying to really understand the way that this tree forms and looks, it's all about trying to look at this rhythm because otherwise it's not going to look as natural as it does in real life. And if you end up overlapping lines at some point, that's okay. The important thing is that it sort of feels like a fluid mark. In some cases, these beginning lines are almost like writing in cursive. So if you imagine writing a cursive F or a cursive S, you don't really lift up your pen in the mid letter. You try to find the longer line and have it be an uninterrupted mark, which really makes it feel more fluid. Okay, so we've got the branches and now I'm just going to kind of litter in some marks that show the overall shape of the top of the tree, the leaves. You don't have to try to get every single leaf in there. And as we're going, I'm also going to try to add some shapes to show where there's a gap in the leaves and we can see some of the branches again, but it doesn't have to be totally perfect. Again, if you have some random marks here and there, it'll end up looking more organic anyways, but you want to try your best to follow the path of the branches you already started with. Okay, so with a few more marks in the middle here, that's a pretty good start. And the last thing I want to do with this pen is just show an outline of the shadow. And I'm doing that so that we get a sense of the light. Now, if you're drawing from life, which I hope you are, I hope you watch this video and then go outside and draw from a tree that you actually see before your very eyes. You might not have the

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most powerful lighting. It might be a foggy day or the tree might be back lit. So it really depends on what you're looking at, but I like to try to find powerful contrast because it helps us to see the shapes of the shadow a little bit easier. Okay. So I have a good beginning sketch here and I'm going to take my medium brush pen now and try to define the difference between the area of light and the area that's in shadow. So if I'm going along this branch here, that means this whole side is going to be in shadow, this branch here as well, this branch here. And what I like to do for some of these shadows is just kind of stroke in the value like that so that you can see that there are individual leaves making specific crisp shadows on the trunk. Okay, and we can do that down here as well. Darken this whole branch. And now let's work on the leaves and try to find a way to add in value that shows that the light is coming from above and casting a shadow that goes off to the left side. And if you do want to get specific with leaves, try to look at how they shape out some of the negative space around the edges. If you try to do every leaf on the inside part of the tree, it's going to take you a lot longer. So this is all about thinking about lighting and value as opposed to specific details, especially at this point. All right, so we can see that the lighting is starting to look a little more credible, so that's good. I'm going to keep pushing this around. And one of the reasons I like using this tool for this tree drawing is because you can make broader strokes and fill in a large area like this pretty quickly, but you can also pull back and add some strokes like that to focus on some of the more specific leaves. There's going to be a little bit more of a sense of lighter area on this side because that's where the light is coming from. So we don't need as much black on this side here. Now I'm going to work on the shadow that's on the ground. You can see that once you get that shadow on the ground, it really makes the light source a lot more evident, a lot more credible looking. And sometimes when you're looking at any object, doesn't have to be a tree, whatever it is you're studying, the contrast might not be that strong. You might see just a subtle difference between light and dark, but I think if you end up pushing that value even more so the contrast is really strong, it can help strengthen your drawing and make it look a lot more iconic, a lot more solid. So the last thing I want to do is get some marks here to show the layers in the trunk. So there's some lines in here. All right, so that helps to strengthen that. And then a couple more leaves in here just to help keep that flow looking good. So now we're done drawing my tree. So I hope what you do now, take a little break, go outside, give yourself 20 minutes or 15 minutes and draw your own tree.

In-person tree study with Yao

- To start off, let's choose one or two trees to paint. We're going to single them out, study them before we move on to a more complex landscape. So where I'm sitting, I'm thinking something tall, like this tall eucalyptus tree right here, and then a bushier shorter one for a variety and I can get a sense of scale and different types of textures that I'll be using. Starting with the trunk of the tree. Now notice how I don't sketch with pencil beforehand. If you're more comfortable with that, definitely go for it. The reason why I don't is because I like to improvise as I go and be surprised by what I'm painting. It often informs me of what I want to paint next or what I'm painting at the time. This is a size 16. I like this one because it has a really pointy tip. It allows me to create really detailed work or do branches like I'm doing right now, but I can also press down quite a bit and get fatty or wider leaves. I'm using a permanent sap green here. I'm intentionally not focusing on details too much. I'm more concerned about the overall shape of the tree. So because we're out in the elements, if you will, the drying time is a lot faster. So one, if you want all the blends to happen, you'll need to move at a faster rate or you can use it to your advantage and start layering with it.

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The other thing that I'm doing is I'm constantly looking back at my subject. I'm picking out certain, maybe it's an area of the foliage that I want to focus on. I'm not taking it, I'm not trying to get the photorealistic aspect of it because again, everything is moving, there's breeze going through, so I can't focus completely on just one area, but I am constantly looking back for reference. I'm dapping lightly in some areas, particularly towards the outer part of the tree because that's where it fades more in the background. So I get a little more perspective. This tree in particular have a lot of clusters in certain areas, so I'm trying to get that characteristic. I actually love painting outside also because it's a very abstract way of depicting nature because it forces you to not be able to focus on details so much. You can be super gestural. Some leaves are behind and some leaves are in front. I'm keeping that in mind. You can also make it up, use your artistic license. I'm painting this one as a study, so going to move pretty quickly here. It's just to get an idea of the types of strokes I'll be using, how heavy I want to press with my brush, the overall shape of the tree, the lighting that I'm working with. So don't feel like you have to dwell too much on any one piece. Adding just a little bit of detail in the trunk. Perhaps a little bit of foliage. The brown that I picked up was a burnt amber. Adding some foliage at the bottom just for reference. Oh, you can work with that. Not a problem. You can use your brush strokes to depict the different types of foliage. Seems like what I'm looking at in the back, there's some that are longer and thinner, not as bushy. All right, let's move on to the next one.

Tiny traced trees with Lisa
- I love bottle brush trees. I have a huge collection of them. In fact, sometimes I bleach them so they come green and then I take all the color out and they sit on my window sill. I really like them. And lo and behold, they make cool shadows. They're also full of texture. They're really bristly and hard. So we're going to try and capture some of that with my graphite pencil. Let's line these guys up at the bottom of the page so they're like a little forest. Okay. And I think I'm going to include the base because I think it's really funny. I'm really trying to think about how the bristles move in space and how rough they are. So I'm trying to draw kind of willy-nilly. There's a middle wire that goes up the tree and then they go in all different directions. There's some stragglers down at the bottom that I want to try and get to. The really fun thing about this is as I keep going, I feel like I'm getting looser and looser because I've drawn it a couple times. So it's like everything, my wrist gets looser. I'm concentrating less. It's getting more free form, which is part of why I like this technique. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight trees. Yay. I'm going to add some color. Let's do real color. Let's do green, green trees because why not? Maybe I'll alternate. I'll do a light green for this one and this one. I'm painting over the shadow drawing just to add some spot color and some interest. And you'll notice the graphites moving around a little bit. That's fine. Kind of dotting, dabbing. And let's do a crazy color. How about pink? I like pink and green together. Let's do the bases all the same color. How about let's make a different color green. I don't really like this color green right out of the box, so I'm going to mix it maybe with a little ochre just to tone it down a little bit. Much better. I like puky greens. I'll do all the bases the same. And then because I've lost some of the density of the graphite, I'm just going to go over a little bit of it. Not all of it, just in a few spots just to kind of punch it back up. And I don't even care if I'm going over wet watercolor, just going to work right through it. The watercolor dulled it down a little bit. I'm just going to go ahead and go over it. I don't mind if the pencil catches. It's really about being free. This technique is so good for keeping yourself loose. I mean, you can't go wrong with drawing the shadow and then you just play. It's really just about putting color where you want it to,

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redrawing when you feel like you've made a mistake. It's not about doing things really precise or really nitpicky and that's kind of the fun of it.

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